

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

TRSE-00 (ISO) W

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R 181500Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9215

INFO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI UNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ATHENS 4508

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GR

SUBJECT: CARAMANLIS ASSURES AHEPA LEASERS THAT AMERICANS

ALWAYS WELCOME IN GREECE

1. LEADERS OF THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL AND PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION (AHEPA) CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS ON JUNE 17. DURING THE DISCUSSION THE AHEPA LEADERS INFORMED THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE IMPRESSION EXISTING IN THE UNITED STATES THAT THERE IS ANTI-AMERICAN FEELING IN GREECE. THEY EXPLAINED THAT THIS IMPRESSION IMPEDES THE REALIZATION OF INVESTMENTS IN GREECE, THE ARRIVAL OF TOURISTS, ETC.

2. IN REPLY, ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT, THE PRIME MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IMPRESSION IS GROUNLESS. CARAMANLIS ADDED THAT THE GREEK PEOPLE NOT ONLY FEEL NO HOSTILITY BUT INSTEAD HAVE FRIENDLY FEELINGS TOWARD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHO, IN THE PAST AS WELL AS NOW, HAVE SHOWN IN MANY WAYS - THROUGH CONGRESS, THE PRESS, ETC. - THEIR SUPPORT FOR GREECE. HE CONTINUED THAT THESE FRIENDLY FEELINGS SHOULD NOT BE RELATED TO THE BITTERNESS WHICH THE GREEK PEOPLE MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED AS A RESULT OF A PARTICULAR

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POLICY OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER

CONCLUDED WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT AMERICANS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME IN GREECE.

3.

3. FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING WITH THE PREMIER, THE
AHEPA LEADERS - SUPREME PRESIDENT CHIRGOTIS,
SUPREME VICE PRESIDENT DERZIS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE
FRIENDS OF GREECE COMMITTEE DOURIS - MET WITH LOCAL
PRESS REPRESENTATIVES. THEY INDICATED THAT THEY HAD
INVITED THE PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT THE U.S. AS THE
GUEST OF AHEPA. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE PRESSURE OF
BUSINESS, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT THE
INVITATION AT THIS TIME. ANOTHER POINT THEY MADE TO
THE PRESS WAS THAT AHEPA WOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS
IN SUPPORT OF THE GREEK CAUSE, AGAINST AID TO TURKEY
AND FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN CYPRUS.

5. CHIRGOTIS MENTIONED THAT THE AHEPA CONVENTION IN CINCINNATI
IN AUGUST WOULD DISCUSS THE FEASIBILITY OF FLOATING
"GREEK BONDS" IN THE U.S TO HELP RAISE UP TO
\$200 MILLION TO ASSIST THE GREEK GOVERNMENT IN ITS
ECONOMIC EFFORTS FOLLOWING THE JUNTA PERIOD. AHEPA
LEADERS ALSO NOTED THEIR CONVENTION WILL CONSIDER
PLANS TO IMPORVE THE AHEPA WING OF EVANGELISMOS
HOSPITAL IN ATHENS BY CONSTRUCTING AN OPEN-HEART SURGERY
THEATER THERE.

5. COMMENT: WITH REFERENCE TO CHIRGOTIS' COMMENTS ABOVE
REGARDING "GREEK BONDS," WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE SUBJECT
CAME UP AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S INITIATIVE DURING HIS
MEETING WITH THE AHEPA LEADERS. IN A SUBSEQUENT MEETING
WITH PAPALIGOURAS AND BANK OF GREECE OFFICIALS, WE ARE
TOLD THE MINISTER OF COORDINATION POINTED OUT TO THE
AHEPANS THE VARIOUS DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN SUCHAN
IDEA, WHICH HAS COME UP BEFORE. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS OUR
UNDERSTANDING THAT A HIGH LEVEL GREEK GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL
WILL BE GOING TO THE US SHORTLY TO EXPLORE THE MATTER WITH
AHEPA IN ADVANCE OF ITS CONVENTION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, ANTIAMERICAN FEELING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS04508
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750213-0383
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750636/aaaabgrh.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <03 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CARAMANLIS ASSURES AHEPA LEASERS THAT AMERICANS ALWAYS WELCOME IN GREECE
TAGS: PFOR, GR, AHEPA, (CARAMANLIS, CONSTANTINOS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006